

Decision 03-02-007 February 13, 2003

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of PACIFIC GAS AND
ELECTRIC COMPANY, a California
Corporation, for a Permit To Construct the
Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project
Pursuant to General Order 131-D. (U 39 E)

Application 01-07-004
(Filed July 9, 2001)

O P I N I O N

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) requests a Permit to Construct power lines and associated substation modifications to be known as the Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project. The permit is granted for the project described in the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (FMND), as discussed below.

1. Background

By this application, PG&E seeks a permit to construct (PTC) additional transmission capacity in the Rocklin and Roseville area. In conjunction with its application, PG&E filed its Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA). As proposed, the Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project would result in the construction of approximately 4.1 miles of new single circuit 60 kilovolt (kV) overhead electric power line, installation of a new circuit breaker at Atlantic Substation and a new switch at Del Mar Substation. PG&E plans to operate the project at 60 kV but could convert it to 115 kV because the project will be built to 115 kV standards. PG&E subsequently agreed to project modifications,

described in the FMND, which result in a portion of the proposed project being placed underground.

2. The Power Line Route and Substation Modifications

A. Regional Context

The Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project will serve the Del Mar area, which includes the City of Rocklin and south Placer County. The project is located approximately 15 miles northeast of Sacramento, in the cities of Roseville and Rocklin. The Atlantic Substation is located in the City of Roseville and the Del Mar Substation is located in the City of Rocklin.

One single-circuit 60-kV power line provides power to the three substations serving the Del Mar area. The line is known as the Atlantic-Del Mar line between Atlantic Substation and Del Mar Substation and then is called the Placer-Del Mar line between Del Mar Substation and Placer Substation.

PG&E states that it has experienced a significant and consistent increase in electric demand in this area as a result of recent growth in population and economic activity. PG&E's electric load studies show that, without near term action, loads within the Del Mar area will soon routinely exceed existing power line and substation capacity. PG&E asserts that the proposed project will address this urgent need to upgrade the system, and will provide safe and reliable electric service to Del Mar area customers while minimizing project-related environmental impacts. The proposed project would increase the normal capacity in the area by 52 megawatts and, will provide emergency capacity of 77 MW.

B. Existing Facilities

1) Substations

The Atlantic Substation is in the City of Roseville on Harding Boulevard, adjacent to a City of Roseville electric substation¹ and approximately 1,000 feet south of Roseville Parkway. The Atlantic Substation covers 31.5 acres (3.3 acres fenced). It contains three 60/12-kV transformer banks, two 230/60 kV transformer banks, and associated breakers and controls.

The Del Mar Substation is in the City of Rocklin on Sierra Meadows Drive, within an industrial area about 900 feet east of Pacific Street. The Del Mar Substation covers 3.8 acres (1.7 acres fenced) and contains two 60/21/12-kV transformer banks, and associated breakers and controls.

2) Power Lines

The existing single-circuit 60-kV power line begins at Atlantic Substation and heads north, paralleling Harding Boulevard, turns east, crosses Roseville Parkway, Antelope Creek, and the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks before reaching Taylor Road in Rocklin. After crossing Taylor Road and Pacific Street, the line turns northeast and runs for 1.4 miles parallel to Pacific Street. At Sunset Boulevard it turns southeast and parallels Sunset Boulevard for 1,000 feet. At Ruhkala Road, the line turns northeast to Evelyn Avenue, which it parallels eastward to Lost Avenue. The line then turns north and continues on Kannasto Street to Grove Street at which point it runs north, adjacent to Grove Street, across Rocklin Road, and reconnects with Pacific Street. The line then follows Pacific Street until it turns onto Sierra Meadows Drive and enters the Del

¹ Customers located in the City of Roseville receive electricity service from Roseville Electric, not PG&E.

Mar Substation. The line then continues another 10.9 miles in a northerly direction to the Placer Substation.

C. Proposed Project

1) Substations

Changes will be made at both the Atlantic and Del Mar Substations to allow for termination of the new 60 kV line, including moving existing line placements and termination points and installation of new equipment.

Equipment at Del Mar Substation will be rated at 115 kV to allow for future upgrades, but operated at 60 kV.

2) Power Lines

The proposed power line involves about four miles of 60 kV line on tubular steel poles varying in height between 75 and 110 feet. The line will be constructed to 115 kV standards but operated initially at 60 kV. The alignment generally follows existing utility corridors (electrical and railroad). Where possible, an existing 60 kV line on wood poles will be relocated to the new poles, allowing the existing wood poles to be shortened or removed.

D. Final Project as Modified by Mitigation Measures

As a result of the environmental analysis of the project, PG&E has agreed to incorporate several mitigation measures into its project. The most significant change to the project is that PG&E will install the project underground from “just south of Sunset Boulevard to a location at least 120 feet north of Midas Avenue.” (Exhibit 2, p. B-4.) In addition, PG&E will “site all power poles and/or underground transition structures at least 200 feet away from the nearest petroleum products storage tank at the Kinder Morgan tank farm.” (Exhibit 2, p. B-5.) Both of these changes to the project are responsive to concerns raised by the City of Rocklin and citizens in the affected area.

3. Environmental Matters

PG&E its PEA as Exhibit A to its application. A detailed description of the proposed project and equipment is contained in Chapter 2 of the PEA. Figures 2-1 and 2-2 contain maps of the area around the Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project.

On October 16, 2001, this Commission released for public review a Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and Initial Study (together, Draft MND/IS) (Exhibit 1) for the proposed construction of PG&E's Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Rule 17.1 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure. The Draft MND/IS was filed with the State Clearinghouse on October 17, 2001 and the 30-day review and comment period (CEQA Guidelines § 15105) closed on November 16, 2001.

Following the public review period, responses to all comments received on the document were completed, and modifications to the Draft MND and Initial Study were undertaken, as appropriate, to reflect these comments. The revisions are set forth in the Revised MND and initial study. As a result, Mitigation Measure V-1 was incorporated which requires PG&E to locate a portion of its project underground. The Revised MND and Initial Study (Exhibit 5) was recirculated for review and comment consistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15073.5(a). The Revised MND and Initial Study was filed with the State Clearinghouse on October 16, 2002 and the review period ended November 14, 2002.

The Final MND and Initial Study (Exhibit 2) is identified and received as of December 23, 2002 for the Commission to consider in determining whether to approve the project. It includes: the comments received on the Draft MND/IS; the comments received on the Revised MND and Initial Study; modifications to

the text of the Draft and Revised MND and Initial Studies, where appropriate, to address comments; and a Mitigation Monitoring Plan for Commission adoption if the Final MND and Initial Study are approved. The Initial Study was prepared to identify the potential effects on the environment from the construction and operation of the proposed project and to evaluate the significance of these effects and was based on information presented in PG&E's PEA, site inspection by the Commission's environmental team, and other environmental analyses of the project. Within the PEA, mitigation measures addressing potentially significant impacts were proposed by PG&E and have been incorporated into the project description.

Based on the Initial Study, the project proposed by PG&E is mitigable to less-than-significant effects or no impacts in all areas. However, to mitigate the visual impacts of the proposed project, Commission staff concluded that undergrounding a portion of the proposed project was required. As part of its PEA, PG&E proposed mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to a level that is less than significant (see Table B-4 of Exhibit 1). PG&E has also agreed to include the staff's recommended mitigation measures (*see* Table D-1 of Exhibit 2 in the project). Implementation of these mitigation measures would avoid the potential impacts or reduce them to a less-than-significant level in all areas, including aesthetics.

A Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan has been prepared to ensure that the mitigation measures are properly implemented. The plan describes specific actions required to implement each mitigation measure, including information on the timing of implementation and monitoring requirements.

Based on the analysis of the Initial Study, the Draft, Revised, and Final MND, and the mitigation measures identified therein and incorporated into the

project, the Commission finds that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

4. Comments on Draft Decision

The draft decision of the administrative law judge (ALJ) in this matter was mailed to the parties in accordance with Pub. Util. Code § 311(g)(1) and Rule 77.7 of the Rules of Practice and Procedure. No comments were filed.

5. Assignment of Proceeding

Susan P. Kennedy is the Assigned Commissioner and Michelle Cooke is the assigned Administrative Law Judge in this proceeding.

Findings of Fact

1. The Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project will serve an area in Placer County including the towns of Roseville and Rocklin and surrounding communities.

2. There has been a significant increase in electric demand in this area as a result of population growth and increased economic activity.

3. Without relief, loads within the Roseville-Rocklin area will routinely exceed existing power line and substation capacity.

4. The Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project will upgrade PG&E's system and will provide safe and reliable electric service to the Roseville-Rocklin area while minimizing environmental impacts.

5. The FMND reflects the independent judgment of this Commission.

6. The contents of the FMND conform to the requirements of CEQA.

7. The FMND identified no significant environmental effects of the project that could not be avoided or reduced to non-significant levels by changes to the project that have been accepted by PG&E.

8. The Commission has considered the FMND in determining to approve the Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project.

9. Based on the mitigation measures included in the FMND, the Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Conclusions of Law

1. The FMND has been processed in compliance with the requirements of CEQA.

2. The FMND has been completed in compliance with the requirements of CEQA.

3. The Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project (including mitigation measures) is approved, subject to the Mitigation Implementation and Monitoring Plan included in the FMND.

4. Because of the need for timely action, today's decision should be made effective immediately.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (FMND) is identified as Exhibit 2 and is received into evidence on December 23, 2002.

2. The FMND related to the application in this proceeding is adopted pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

3. The mitigation, monitoring, and reporting program included in the FMND is adopted.

4. Pacific Gas and Electric Company is authorized to construct the power lines (overhead and underground) and associated substation modifications known as the Atlantic-Del Mar Reinforcement Project, subject to the mitigation measures described in the FMND to avoid or mitigate the reasonably foreseeable adverse environmental affects of the project.

5. Application 01-07-004 is closed.

This order is effective today.

Dated February 13, 2003, at San Francisco, California.

MICHAEL R. PEEVEY
President

CARL W. WOOD
LORETTA M. LYNCH
GEOFFREY F. BROWN
SUSAN P. KENNEDY
Commissioners